PFC revista
Psicopatologia Fenomenológica Contemporânea

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Husserl and the layers of human development

Husserl e as camadas do desenvolvimento humano

Marcus Sacrini

Abstract

The aim is to reconstruct Husserl's main conceptual contributions to the theme of subjective development. It investigates the notion of personhood in a broad and strict sense and recognizes how an instinctive-affective base is active, on which a layer of acts guided by rational motivations rises (in the case of human personhood). It also explores how ethical development is possible at this level of personhood. Finally, the generic and individual levels of analysis for the study of personal development are discerned.

Keywords: Husserl; development; personhood; typicality.

Publicado pela Sociedade Brasileira Psicopatologia Fenômeno-Estrutural (SBPFE)

Psicopatol. Fenomenol. Contemp.
2025; vol14 (2): 24-43

Published Online
12 de dezembro de 2025
https://doi.org/10.37067/rpfc.v14i2.1267

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Resumo

Busca-se reconstruir as principais contribuições conceituais de Husserl para o tema do desenvolvimento subjetivo. Investiga-se a noção de pessoalidade em sentido lato e estrito e reconhece-se como atua aí uma base instintivo-afetivo sobre a qual eleva-se (no caso da pessoalidade humana) uma camada de atos guiados por motivações racionais. Explora-se também como nesse nível de pessoalidade, configura-se a possiblidade do desenvolvimento ético. Por fim, são discernidos os níveis de análise genérico e individual para o estudo do desenvolvimento pessoal.

Palavras-chave: Husserl; desenvolvimento; pessoalidade; tipicidade.

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Introduction

Edmund Husserl founded phenomenology in his texts on the consciousness of logical validity in 1900. From then on, and for more than thirty years, he broadened the scope of phenomenological investigation, seeking to consolidate it as a science of pure consciousness capable of elucidating the entire constitution of experiential meaning. Major twentieth-century authors—such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Ricœur—took Husserl's philosophy at least as a point of departure for the production of their own work. And Husserl's texts remain a valuable source of fine-grained conceptual analyses that can contribute to various contemporary theoretical discussions. This would seem to be the case with the notion of subjective development. Although Husserl did not propose a systematic analysis of the theme, there are important reflections scattered across several of his works. We propose to reconstruct these reflections in broad strokes and to present, in synoptic fashion, the conceptual framework sketched by the author for understanding, from a phenomenological point of view, the development of the human individual. To this end, the exposition is organized as follows: in the next section, we present the different notions of the egoity of experience and locate the level at which one can recognize the notion of personhood in a broad sense, which is rooted in aesthesiological bodily experience. In the third section, we seek to circumscribe the basic affective-instinctual operations carried out at this level of experience. In the fourth section, we finally address personhood in the strict human sense, marked by the exercise of rational motivations. In the fifth section, we present the uniquely teleological horizon of human personhood (in contrast, for example, with animal personhood): the consolidation of an ethical form of life. Finally, in the sixth section, we seek to distinguish how human subjectivity—composed of all the layers previously made explicit—can be studied not only in its generic typical aspects but also in its individual ones.

Senses of egoity and of personhood

The transcendental phenomenology is presented by Husserl as the doctrine that explicates the constitution of the sense of any kind of objectivity through the description of different syntheses produced by pure subjectivity. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, the breadth of this project is stated quite clearly: "Every conceivable sense, every conceivable being, whether called immanent or transcendent, falls within the domain of transcendental

subjectivity as the constituting of sense and being" (Hua I, §41, p. 117)[1]. The central methodological procedure for advancing this project is the phenomenological reduction. It consists in suspending the objective validity of being in order to explore pure phenomenal appearing as a field of self-reflection, in which subjectivity—freed from the naïve presupposition of worldly being—can follow, at every step, the phenomenal constitution of the latter (that is, how from "appearing" we ascribe a "sense of being").

It should be noted that within this field of phenomenological experience it is possible to track not only how worldly being gradually acquires its specific sense. Subjectivity itself—far from being some invisible focus of appearing—can also be thematized in its various formations and levels of manifestation. Husserl calls attention to this topic in §31 of the *Meditations*: "even the ego is for itself a being in continuous evidence, therefore continuously constituting itself as being" (p. 100). And it is, as we shall see, on the basis of the constitution of the senses of being-I that the theme of development can be addressed in all its richness by transcendental phenomenology.

Husserl indicates three levels at which this transcendental constitution or self-constitution of the I can be fulfilled. At the first level (explored in §31), the I is explicated as "the identical pole of lived experiences." Whatever manifests itself does so for an egological center that, as it were, coordinates the multiplicity of acts directed toward the objects in question. For example, I can see a bottle from multiple points of view, each revealing a particular mode of manifestation; these perceptual multiplicities appear oriented toward the I that continuously sustains the perceptual acts. In other words, the appearing of any object, in its inexhaustible variability, manifests itself according to a unitary egological form, namely, the "for-me"; and the I, in this minimal sense, is a pole that unifies these noematic multiplicities—whatever appears does so in the form of my lived experiences, radiating from an egological center that recognizes itself in each particular experience (every appearing is an appearing for an I).

Understood in this way as a "formal" center for the unification of lived experiences (in the sense of attributing an egological form to appearing—"my perception," "my imagination," etc.), the I results from the static analysis of consciousness, which seeks to formulate in general terms the correlational structures (noesis–noema) of the principal intentional acts (perception, memory, imagination, judgment, etc.). In turn, through genetic analysis—which seeks to follow the development of subjective formations within the immanent temporality of consciousness—

[1] All of Husserl's texts are cited according to the editions of the Husserliana collection (Hua).

other levels of exploration of the I are disclosed. In §32, Husserl presents the I as a "substrate of habitualities." What stands out at this level is the fact that the I's acts do not merely vanish upon their execution, nor are they limited to becoming representations for memory. Acts sediment as privileged modes of taking a position. The principal decisions of the I remain in force, dispositionally orienting it. From certain acts, others become more likely; and, in the face of similar situations, decisions akin to those previously taken may impose themselves with greater ease. The field of subjective manifestation is thus configured not as a mere neutral focus for concatenating experiential multiplicity, but as a particular relief of preferences and rejections. Here Husserl recognizes the domain of personhood in a broad sense—there is an ordering into a relative dispositional stability, such that a style of insertion into worldly experience is instituted. It is worth noting that this notion of the personal I is presented by Husserl "in the broadest sense of all, which also permits one to speak of subhuman persons" (p. 101). Hence, at the limit, this notion of personhood based on the relative permanence of a habitual subjective field is still not sufficient to discern specifically human personhood[2].

We shall return to this point. It is now fitting to make explicit the third level of egoity disclosed by Husserl. This is the I designated as a "monad," a theme developed in §33 of the *Cartesian Meditations*. The term harks back to Leibniz's philosophy, and Husserl seems to retain from that modern notion only the idea of a self-unfolding that concretizes itself across the most diverse strata of subjective operations. Indeed, Husserl characterizes the concretion of the I at this third level of analysis by emphasizing "the flowing pluriformity of its intentional life and of the objects that are thereby intended and that may, eventually, be constituted for it as beings" (p. 102). Further on, Husserl expresses quite clearly what he has in view when he remarks that "the concrete monadic ego comprises the whole life of consciousness, actual and potential" (ibid.). With the notion of monad, the author seeks to capture the complexity of the life of the I as it unfolds from itself different kinds of intentional capacities through which it places itself in varied situations and in which it assigns sense to the most diverse kinds of

[2] If it is at this second level of the constitution of egoity that personhood appears, then perhaps clinical efforts to understand the phenomenon of depersonalization should concentrate there. By depersonalization one generally understands experiences in which the subject does not recognize himself in his own intentional acts, as if they were produced by someone else. Now, at least in many such cases, experience continues to be synthesized for a focal nucleus. Thus that minimal notion of "for-me," or "mineness," arising from the first level of the I studied by Husserl remains passively operative. However, there is no longer coincidence between the I as the bearer of a dispositional style and this founding synthesis, which therefore continues to operate impersonally. Strictly speaking, there is no rupture of the basic "mineness" of experience (the latter continues, as it were, to be satisfactorily synthesized), but the personalized I does not adhere to this operativity (hence the subject acknowledges that there are ordered experiences—for example, hearing his own voice—yet does not recognize them as his, but as someone else's). On this point, cf. Fazakas, 2025.

objectivities (real and ideal, fleeting and enduring, etc.).

From this notion of subjective concretion, it becomes possible to approach the intrinsic processuality of human development. Before that, however, we must determine more precisely the scope of an investigation oriented toward the human. In §35 of the same work, Husserl clarifies that the content of the considerations developed up to that point (on subjective self-constitution) can be thematized from the standpoint of psychology as a positive science. For this, of course, one does not carry the suspension of the validity of being contained in the phenomenological reduction to its limit; rather, the investigation is maintained under the unproblematized horizon of the actual world and of the human individuality situated therein. Husserl comments: "to the concrete transcendental ego there corresponds, then, the I-man, the soul concretely apprehended as pure in itself and for itself, with the psychic polarization: I as the pole of my habitualities, of my character properties" (Hua I, p. 107). Thus, what follows is not a purely transcendental investigation but an analysis that seeks to unveil the intentional structures and formations as they obtain for subjectivity already individualized in the world. It is at this level that we will be able to discern what marks the specificity of human development.

Let us return, for this purpose, to that idea of personhood in the broad sense, presented by Husserl when treating the I as a substrate of habitualities. This notion makes it possible to qualify the very idea of individualized subjectivity in a general sense, one that would hold not only for humans but also for animals. In §21 of the course *Phenomenological Psychology*, taught in the 1920s, Husserl laments that this broad notion has not yet been fully developed:

> unfortunately, we lack a concept of person, as broad as possible, an indispensable concept that would encompass the life of higher animals, and would designate only a being that, as egological spontaneity, is active or is affected, and that, as such an I, possesses permanent egological properties (Hua IX, p. 130).

And what would compose this personhood in the broad sense? What would be its most general attributes (those that do not yet allow one to distinguish between animals and humans)? Husserl points to the incarnate character of experience—or, if we prefer, to experience as always mediated by corporeity. The author comments:

> experience of corporeity as corporeity is then already animated experience or rather, in a twofold way, psychophysical experience. It concerns the psychic at the lowest level: the somatologically psychic, the directly incarnate, the directly animating and experienced as united with the physical (Hua IX, p. 131).

Subjective experience as the experience of an individual occurs as incarnate experience. Subjective acts are lived from the own body as a psychophysical unifying center. According to Husserl, "all psychic acts are built upon a psychic that is immediately incarnate, a somatically 'sensible' basis; they always carry something sensible with them,

though in such a way that they themselves are not properly localized" (Hua IX, p. 132). In this way, the whole life of psychic acts through which personhood develops is rooted in corporeity, which is lived as a living center, an organ of experiences. It is not, then, that the body is an object among others toward which consciousness can turn (even if this can occur, at least in part). Corporeity must be considered as the founding mode by which consciousness operates; that is, one is conscious of something or of oneself by means of corporeity, which proves to be a structuring aspect of "being conscious."

In this way, the central role of corporeity in any approach to personal development is established. All personhood develops on the basis of living bodily individuality. And it should be noted, undoubtedly, that in the broad sense of personhood the foundational corporeity of experiencing must be understood within the limits permitted by the biological/animal species. Husserl comments on this point in a 1921 manuscript ("Normality and Kinds of Animate Beings"). In that text, he explores the theme of monads as individual units that self-constitute: "a monad can only be insofar as it develops, and a worldview can only be insofar as it is the product of its development" (Hua XIV, p. 128). Husserl has in view the lofty problem of the constitution of a true knowledge of the world. But to that end, he considers the most basic layers of monadic development. Further on in the text, he remarks:

> Each monad must constitute a living body, and that body must be genuinely given in each monad's worldview or be implicated in the horizon. Empirically speaking: every organic development is limited, bound to the organic type of corporeity. Is it a mere fact that every living body develops only up to a certain height (the mature animal) and cannot develop *in infinitum* in such a way that it would be capable of being the cognitive organ of all worldly knowledge? Or is it a transcendental necessity to show that a world in general can only be constituted in unity with a system of development of animals and animal monads, with a certain parallelism between psychic and bodily development (here followed on the side of cognition)? (ibid.).

Husserl develops these analyses with the problem of knowledge in view, but their results apply to the general analysis. From the transcendental point of view, as we have seen, the monad's lived experiences are disclosed as self-constituting its sense of subjective being, and it experiences itself as corporeal. Now, from the empirical point of view, this means that subjectivity is tied to an organic species whose development is limited by biological parameters intrinsic to that species. Further on, Husserl acknowledges this point: "thus, every consciousness that stands within this worldly nexus—it seems—is a consciousness unitively bound (or rather, a psychic life), it has ontogenetic and phylogenetic unity" (p. 129). One might argue that Husserl faces difficulties in assigning transcendental weight to these findings, which delimit a final factual backdrop for subjectivity. In any case, at the level at which our analysis unfolds (that of a

phenomenological psychology), it is not necessary to be concerned with the transcendental conditions of possibility for formulating this situated character of subjectivity. What matters, at the intermediate level we adopt, is to take one step further in subjective rootedness: we have seen that all psychic life is organized and manifests itself as bodily life, and we now see that this life is ordered and matures as organic life within a species. Thus, it is not enough to recognize that higher active subjective life is rooted in the passive syntheses of living corporeity; it is necessary to recognize that there is an ontogenetic and phylogenetic passivity to which living corporeity itself is subject.

The affective basis of personhood

Husserl here seems to anticipate notions such as the "a priori of the organism" (Merleau-Ponty, 1942, p. 134) or the "a priori of the species" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 93), to use Merleau-Ponty's expressions, which in turn point to the work of authors like Goldstein, Köhler, Koffka, among others. The German phenomenologist does not develop this theme systematically, but from very early on in his work he analyzes how the most basic layers of intentional life are ordered (which, as we know, are necessarily bound to living corporeity). And in this domain, dimensions of affective life stand out. Without any pretense of exhausting the topic, let us draw attention to the desiring dimension—or, in its most basic manifestation, the instinctual dimension—of affective life. In a 1924 text published in *Husserliana* XIV, the author proposes some reflections on the theme of instinct and then ponders:

> what constitutive problems are sketched here for the representative formation of the human-animal self itself (of the person in the broadest sense), of the surrounding thing-world, of the surrounding world in general, including the personal surrounding world (other persons) with predicates of egological and interpersonal sense?" (Hua XIV, pp. 334–335).

Understanding instinct allows one to grasp, at a basic level, how personhood in the broad sense is mobilized and oriented toward action. Let us then ask: what does Husserl propose about instinct? Here it is worth marking a contrast in his reflection, as aptly noted by the commentator Bruce Bégout (1998). Husserl already speaks of instinctive tendencies in the *Logical Investigations*, a work published in 1901. There, in §15 of the Fifth Investigation, he examines whether lived experiences pertaining to affectivity can be considered complete acts or not. Among many other themes, in treating desire Husserl problematizes the fact that "not every desire seems to require a conscious relation to something desired, since we are often moved by an obscure tendency and pull," which would seem to refer to "the expanded sphere of natural instincts" (Hua XIX/1, p. 409).

Husserl tries to clarify this point by proposing an alternative: either there are non-intentional sensations that polarize desires, or the representations that mobilize desiring are indeterminate, not yet marked off in terms of precise objects. Now, in the 1924 text Husserl distinguishes quite clearly the instinctual pull or drive from representational indeterminacy. Instinct is an "empty consciousness," the attestation of a lack, but it is not in itself representational nor positional. "We must separate, in a phenomenologically more precise manner, an empty horizon from an empty horizon of representation. Empty consciousness is, as instinctive, undisclosed, not yet representationally empty. I could also say: no doxic thesis is yet possible, nor any active doxic thesis" (Hua XIV, p. 334). It is true that instinct lends itself to being apprehended as such insofar as it is exercised upon representations. Husserl asserts: "the disclosability of instincts originally presupposes—inasmuch as they relate to things or living beings—perception and perceptibility. By the feeding instinct no animal can originally experience the external world" (Hua XIV, p. 333). The circuit of instinctual desiring is completed through the perceptibility of that which relieves the tension, that which satisfies the lack. By itself the feeding instinct does not reveal what satiates it; representations of food must be associated so that the circuit of instinctual mobilization and satiation (which presupposes interaction with worldly elements) can occur. Here there is a complex of acts, a polarization of perceived data as capable of providing instinctual satiation.

Thus, in very general terms, experiential openness at the level of personhood in the broad sense takes shape. Husserl emphasizes in *Ideas II* that the person is always correlated with a meaningful surrounding world. The person exists within an environment configured according to the operative intentional capacities. According to Husserl, "the surrounding world is the world that is perceived by the person in his acts, is remembered, grasped in thought, supposed or disclosed as such and such; it is the world of which the personal ego is conscious, the world that is there for him, with which he stands in such-and-such relations" (Hua IV, §50, p. 185). Now, the world that appears and makes sense at the level of broad personhood is a world pervaded by affective polarizations, which attract or repel in accordance with the satisfaction of the basic needs that sustain animal life. It is on the basis of instinctive and desiring affectivity that the person in the broad sense (animals) experiences the world and sediments privileged modes of comportment. As we have seen, instinct makes use of perceptibility in order to be fulfilled; thus there arise typical apprehensions of the environment, which single out the elements that contribute to the maintenance of life and those that must be avoided. Relatively complex behaviors

manifest themselves, connected with the recognition and storing of food, hunting, group tasks, reproduction, etc. Drive-like intentionality, in a broad sense, permits the configuration of a surrounding world that is already quite complex.

Personhood in the strict sense

Let us now turn to the notion of personhood in the strict sense, the one that applies to humans. As we shall see, the complexity of intentional acts—and, correlatively, of the surrounding world—expands in a remarkable way. What marks strict personhood is the capacity to act autonomously, constituting, by way of rational motivations, a surrounding world in which the satisfactions sought are not merely of a factual-descriptive order but of a normative order (notions such as justification, correctness, and truth become central here). Husserl comments on this change of level in §59 of *Ideas II*: "in the original genesis, the personal I constitutes itself not only as a personality determined by drives, at first and continuously impelled by original 'instincts' and passively subjected to them, but also as a higher, autonomous, free I, in particular guided by rational motives, and not merely a dragged-along, unfree I" (Hua IV, p. 255). Strict personhood requires more than the constitution of affectively guided habits; one must take into account rational operations and decisions, which in turn presuppose the exercise of articulated language and, more generally, insertion into cultural traditions that connect the I with past and future generations.

The domain of culture concerns the subjective production of sense and its eventual objectification in real supports. To the real predicates of things and natural events are added predicates that convey significations in a broad sense. Thus sounds can convey an articulated language; natural things can be transformed so as to bear a teleological sense (tools, clothing, etc.); the environment can be transformed into a humanized territory (cf. HuaM IV, pp. 122–138). Cultural senses are objectified (and thereby take part in real interactions) and conventionalized; they become typical forms of action, which are transmitted intergenerationally.

As we have seen, animals can develop quite complex behaviors, but normally limited to interactions with other animals present within the vital horizon. With the transmission of culturally meaningful predicates, a human person is inserted into an intergenerational nexus that far exceeds his lifespan and sediments forms of life that refer not merely to the possibilities of the current activation of his intentional capacities, but rather to conventions

and traditions that confer historicity upon ways of life (culturally shaped behaviors are not the expression of a drive that operates only in the present; they actualize and transform a legacy of rules and interdictions that exceeds the limited horizon of individual living)[3]. And it is worth noting that the culturalization or conventionalization of human action encompasses even the domain of basic passive drive-life. Husserl observes that basic bodily needs (sleep, hunger, sexuality, etc.) occur periodically, such that it is possible to seek to satisfy them with a certain predictability. Typical forms, culturally inherited, are consolidated for stabilizing basic needs and for developing intentional capacities (cf. Hua XXXIX, pp. 581–582).

It should be noted that it is through insertion into cultural traditions (which involve articulated language, the use of the most basic tools, and conventionalized ways of dealing with the body in the face of everyday tasks) that the person becomes humanized—that is, passes from personhood in the broad sense to personhood in the strict sense. Husserl comments on this point in a text from the 1930s:

> The human being is not only in community but is insofar as one who is transformed in communalization and one who is formed in accordance with it and with its multiple motivations, such that, as one who is being transformed, he bears within himself the genesis issuing from the community, or, what is the same, he bears within himself, intentionally, his human formers (Hua XV, pp. 154–155).

One may conceive the human as a biological being endowed with drive-capacities. In this sense, as we have seen, we can think of a person in the broad sense. However, the human being as a person in the strict sense is one who has been formed through communalization, through the assimilation of sense-contents transmitted from very early on in life and who thereby has shaped his intentional capacities in accordance with conventional patterns of action and insertion into the most varied everyday contexts. And Husserl underscores how a human I essentially depends on other I's in order to stabilize itself as a person in the strict sense. In a text from the 1920s, he observes: "the origin of personhood lies in empathy and in the social acts that then arise. That the subject becomes conscious of himself as the pole of his acts is not sufficient for personhood; he is constituted only upon entering into social relations with other subjects, through whom he becomes objective on the practical plane" (Hua XIV, p. 175).

Human personhood does not emerge merely through passive spontaneity (as is the case with instinctual tendencies); for its consolidation it depends upon repeated interpersonal contacts, through which typical ways of employing intentional capacities are

[3] On this point, cf. Venuta, 2023.

sedimented—ways that are subject to supra-personal normativities (for example: how to regulate basic bodily needs, how to comport oneself in different institutional contexts, how to develop personal and collective projects amid sociohistorical circumstances). In this sense, humanizing personalization is never an absolutization of the I, for the recognition of oneself as a relatively autonomous individual capable of proposing personal projects depends on an intentional stabilization that necessarily refers to other people and to traditions of sense. Husserl asserts in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*: "we see here, as an *a priori*, that self-consciousness and the consciousness of others are inseparable; it is unthinkable, and not merely as a matter of fact, that I should be a human being in a world without my being a human being" (Hua VI, p. 256). We humanize ourselves as individuals among individuals; we form our most basic capacities as similar to those of other people. Strict personalization therefore depends upon mutual acts; it is not accomplished as solitary maturation, and the resulting self-understanding is founded upon the sociohistorically available typical forms by which the process of learning (cultural transmission) takes place.

The ethical form of life

With humanizing personalization through entry into numerous culturally mediated relations, new horizons of development open up—horizons that are specifically human. Husserl reflects on human development in his third article on Renewal:

> It is a development that is clearly distinct from a merely organic development and thus also from a merely animal development. It belongs objectively to an organic development that it leads *realiter* to a typical mature form, in a typical flow of becoming. The human being, like the animal, also has his organic development, from the bodily point of view and thereby also from the spiritual point of view, with the corresponding stages of development. But the human being, as a rational being, also has the possibility and free capacity for a totally different kind of development, in the form of free self-conduct and self-education, toward an absolute final idea that he knows (freely formed in his own rational cognition), that he values, and that is set in advance in his very will. It is a development toward the free "ethical" personality, and indeed in personal acts in which one wants to be, at the same time, a rational doing and a rational fact—that is, a striving for something truly good which, on the other hand, as such striving, *a priori* strives for itself and freely brings itself about" (Hua XXVII, pp. 36–37).

It becomes quite clear here that life in culture and the exercise of rational capacities allow one to anticipate a personal development of a new kind, one that exceeds personhood in the broad sense. It is a development actively conducted by way of decisions and reflections on their results toward ethical ideals, so as to lead life not only to organic maturation but toward that which is actively posited as a value of goodness and comes to govern the totality of particular acts (acts are no longer merely lived in unreflective spontaneity but take part in a global project of reviewing the totality of living under critical

scrutiny, with a view to realizing the final idea of living in an absolutely justified way). Husserl mentions the ethical form of life as the pinnacle of spiritual life, but he recognizes that there are pre-ethical, globalizing forms of human action. Even in these forms there already is a kind of development quite different from organic maturation. In specifically human forms of life there is the possibility of positing "a general life-goal, of submitting oneself and one's entire life, in its open infinity of future, to a demand for regulation that springs from one's own free will" (Hua XXVII, pp. 26–27). Broad decisions take shape that aim to systematize the unfolding of life around central ideals of personal accomplishment, in accordance with the socio-historical configurations available.

Let us note, however, that the establishment of final ends and their gradual attainment (the typically human form of development) does not presuppose a rupture with the typical functioning of personhood in the broad sense, but rather its reconfiguration in view of specifically human forms of life. In the articles on Renewal, Husserl presents as a salient characteristic of human life the throwing-oneself into action with a view to satisfying what is taken as a good. He puts the point as follows: "to the essence of human life there also belongs the fact that it unfolds continuously in the form of striving; and, finally, it constantly takes on thereby the form of positive striving and is therefore directed toward the attainment of positive values" (Hua XXVII, p. 25). This positive striving posits what is aimed at as a good, and the action to attain the end is motivated by the satisfaction it promises. This is an infrastructural motivation of an affective background: the value offers pleasurable satisfaction and is thus taken as a desirable end. At the most basic level, this infrastructure operates passively, the subject being impelled by drives that seek an immediate satiety. However, at the level of reflected activity the subject is concerned to seek "a continuously concordant and secure global satisfaction," or, in other words, the positive striving turns "consciously, and in different possible forms, toward giving his life the form of a 'happy' satisfactory life" (Hua XXVII, p. 30).

In various texts Husserl sketches problematizations of this shift in level within human intentional structure. In a manuscript from the 1930s, he comments: "instinctual drives, lower-grade drives (animal drives in general)—in the human personal sphere. Drive in its simple effect is no action; being drive-oriented is no personal act, no act of will. Naturally it must be shown how acts of will (acts in the pregnant sense) arise on the basis of drive-sensibility" (Hua XV, p. 599). Primordially, the person is passively directed toward what (supposedly) satisfies his lacks. In this very general sense, living is already positive striving. In a lapidary phrase of Husserl's: "living oriented toward pleasure as the

satisfaction of lacks" (Hua XV, p. 600). As we have seen, what primarily satisfies is that which perceptibly appears and fills the empty openness of instinct; it is that which will be taken as a good, given its direct potential for satisfaction. This affective infrastructure of the search for satisfaction remains operative beyond the primordial passive sphere. Husserl underscores: "not all values must be realized only in primordiality, nor are all worldly objects merely natural objects" (Hua XV, p. 601). Satisfaction is not reducible to the direct consumption of goods; as we have seen, in the sphere of culture objects are endowed with predicates of sense of the most varied kinds, which exceed material physico-chemical properties. Many of the volitional orientations of human personhood are directed toward relations with predicates of sense (for example, the pleasure of appreciating works of art, of understanding a scientific or philosophical text, etc.). The ambit of satisfaction is not reducible to the primordiality of bodily needs but involves culturally constructed and transmitted significations.

In §61 of *Ideas II*, Husserl thematizes this stratification of levels intrinsic to the human being. In investigating the problem of human development, one must recognize two layers of intentional ordering:

> If we take the personal I in its developmental nexuses, then we find two tiers that perhaps can be separated (for example, the lower tier as 'pure' animality), a double 'subjectivity': the higher one is the specifically spiritual, the layer of the *intellectus agens*, of the free I as the I of free acts, including all acts proper to reason, both positive and negative. And then there belongs here the unfree I, unfreedom understood as it holds for an actual I: I let myself be pulled along by sensibility (Hua IV, p. 276).

We can distinguish the I as a center of decision-takings and of actions motivated by an (at least purportedly) rational understanding of circumstances from the sensory egological basis that orders the sensible field as affectively polarized. Husserl allows that there is a "hidden reason" within this domain of sensibility, thus emphasizing that it is not a chaotic heap of data, but rather a pre-active or passive ordering—that is, a disposition of sensible data apprehended according to rules and tendencies susceptible of normative analysis. Here opens the field of studies concerning the associations and instincts that ground personal life. How far does this field extend? According to Husserl:

> Every spirit has a 'side of nature.' This is precisely the subsoil of subjectivity: its having consciousness of sensations, its having reproductions of sensations, its associations, its formation of apperceptions, and even the most basic apperceptions that constitute unities of experience. Immediately belonging to the natural side is the most basic life of feelings, the life of drives, and even the function of attention, which is an egological function just as the egological function of turning-toward is. They form the bridge to specifically being-I and egological life (Hua IV, p. 279).

Let us clarify, however, that this layer of passive associations should not be understood as some sort of self-enclosed domain that would determine the active I as

something external to it. From the point of view of personal experience, this sensory soul is always apprehended as a component of the global subjective experience. Husserl makes this point clear: "this soul is not here an objective (natural) reality, but a 'spiritual soul'; that is, the soul, in this sense, is not defined as a real unity in relation to the circumstances of objective nature" (Hua IV, p. 280). The human I recognizes itself in passive associations and integrates the dispositions formed there into the general style of its personhood. As Husserl insists, "there is an immanent legality to the formation of dispositions as a basis for the subject as taker of positions" (ibid.). Within the psychic base, affective preferences stand out—privileged associations that take part in the experiential concreteness of the I[4].

Generic and individual typicalities in the study of personal development

These would be the principal ontological components that delimit, in general, the possibilities of human development. But taken on their own, the topics distinguished here do not suffice to exhaust the development of any particular person. Husserl treats this point in §60d of *Ideas II*. There he indicates that it is indispensable to think on two levels of analysis if one wishes to understand human personhood: "first, it is a generic type for the I in affection and action. But then, a particular type and an individual type" (Hua IV, p. 270). To elucidate the general determinants of the human still does not clarify how each individual will develop. No doubt there are typical expectations of organic maturation that impose themselves more or less uniformly upon individuals; nevertheless, the formation of individual character presupposes the concretization of particular styles in the exercise of intentional capacities—something that cannot be fully anticipated merely by understanding the general conditions of personhood.

Constitutive phenomenological analysis does not go so far as to describe in detail individual formations of character, at the risk of confusing itself with a clinical psychological analysis. Even so, Husserl reflects on the principal operations at play in the consolidation of a person's individual typicalities. He offers us the following formula for understanding human development: "the person is formed by means of 'experience'" (Hua IV, p. 271). In other words, everything a person lives through mobilizes or sets into operation the different levels of intentionality—from the associative intertwinings of the affective background,

[4] As J. Farges clarifies on this point: "the spiritual soul is the soul of spirit in the sense that it belongs to spirit 'as spirit' to have a soul, that is, 'a complex of natural dispositions on which it depends without, however, being their mechanical effect, and on whose basis it builds, in a motivational and dispositional manner, its autonomy'" (2017, p. 54).

through the forms of attentional responsiveness to affecting data, to decision-takings and the consequent sedimentation of experientially privileged orientations on the basis of such decisions. What is worth underscoring is that not all experiences form the subject in the same way. Husserl emphasizes that the recurrence of experiences whose content is easily apperceived on the basis of a certain inductivity or spontaneous typification of sensible reception precisely both reinforces these typifying patterns of momentary situations and confers upon them a character of ordinariness or everydayness that allows one to handle such situations quickly, without the affection in question significantly altering subjectivity. The author judges:

> Everything has an effect, but not in every respect. In the street I meet people; cars pass by, etc. This has its apperceptive type, within which the bustle of the street is included, while the individual events could have occurred differently. All this particularity, to which I barely pay attention but which prefigures my experiential horizon, alters in no way my moral character, my aesthetic character; for these spheres, no motivation flows from here (Hua IV, pp. 271–272).

Husserl highlights the tendency toward normalization or even affective neutralization of the regular experiences upon which everydayness is constituted. Repetitions of tasks, of commutes, etc.: such situations are quickly apperceived according to their general type and simply reinforce the optimal intentional dispositionality for the fulfillment of the ends tied to their performance (e.g., the most efficient way to make this commute in order to arrive at work, to carry out the repetitive tasks of one's job, and so forth). It may be that regularity fails to obtain, that something unexpected occurs and motivates different attitudes or even a global re-evaluation of the presumed "normality" hitherto attributed—but precisely in such cases, we are no longer dealing with expected everydayness.

Alongside those experiences apperceived as a regular everyday background—which favor the habitual reinstatement of typical modes of position-taking—there are experiences and processes that, to varying degrees, foster reconfigurations of overall operativity: experiences that demand changes, even if momentary, in one's patterns of insertion into situations and that, as Husserl suggested, for example, mobilize moral character and the ensuing self-assessments derived therefrom (for instance, going through a romantic disappointment or the loss of a loved one). It should be emphasized, however, that these potentially reconfigurative experiences are still experiences, and it is within them that typical apprehensive forms are modified. Husserl underscores this point when commenting on the effort to understand another person:

> I enter into relation with different subject-I's and take cognizance of typical moments in pregivennesses, actions, etc., and I apprehend them according to these types—not as though I first had the types abstractly (just as I do not first have in the abstract the type 'tree' when I apprehend a tree as a tree)—but through multiple experiences the type imprints itself and correspondingly we memorize it; and this determines an apperceptive form and thus an abstractable layer within effective apprehension (Hua IV, p. 273).

Thus the typical character should not be taken as a kind of pure idea in which experiences somehow participate; on the contrary, it is directly within the ordering of experiences that typicality operates and, given its stabilization and recurrence in further experiences, allows itself to be grasped as an abstract part of these lived experiences. In this way, the type—individual character—is still something experiential and not a kind of ideal schema that would predetermine from the outside the unfolding of subjective life.

Hence one cannot know a person as an individual without at least partially reconstructing his particular course of development. In general terms, we can always look for the two large layers of intentional operations; but only in their concrete operativity—in the sequence of experiences undergone—does personhood acquire its individual traits. For such understanding, it seems pertinent to distinguish between type-confirming experiences and type-shaping experiences. The typifying tendency of apprehensive forms (subjected to immanent temporality—what is lived sinks back yet remains operative in its global sense and feeds intentional dispositionality) yields a normalization of regular experiences. Even here, to be sure, there is development, since people can become more skillful in carrying out everyday tasks and can enrich their apprehensive forms (consider the differences with which a novice or an expert performs his work, or the differences with which a newly arrived resident or a long-time inhabitant moves in the city, etc.). In any case, there will be salient situations that demand varying degrees of reconfiguration of typical responsiveness, thereby feeding new position-takings, and this in light of modifications in basic affective forms and even in bodily capacities.

On this point, Husserl allows that, to understand the complexity of an individual's personal development, one must also take into account direct causal effects upon corporeity as a material something subject to material interactions. In §61 he remarks: "here the natural-causal also enters. After a severe fall, a person is left with a limp, and this has consequences for his spiritual life: certain groups of motivation are now lost. The real-causal discussion of the consequences is not of interest here" (Hua IV, p. 276). As is clear, the point is not to take personal comportment as determined by the natural causality affecting material corporeity, but rather to note how causal-material effects on the body require a reconfiguration of the motivational system and of spiritual-personal

responsiveness to situations. Thus, causally generated alterations in corporeity or even in the psychophysical unity (for example, given the use of psychoactive substances) should be considered as factors that foster a global reintegration of comportment into particular typical patterns[5].

It is only by reconstructing the particular experiences to which a person has been subjected that one can understand how his individual personal type was consolidated and is constantly transformed. Husserl even formulates a comparison between persons and things subjected to experience: "just as types of things are altered in experience in general in a familiar way, so too with persons" (Hua IV, p. 272). Just as we can understand and even anticipate the transformations an object may undergo in certain experiential circumstances, the understanding of the human type, constructed within personal development, confers a certain predictability upon comportment. "We construct the development of a man when we reconstruct and render intuitive his life course in such a way that the overall *becoming* [*Werden*] of this man becomes experientially comprehensible, particularly with respect to the manner in which he allows himself to be motivated as a subject, together with the determinate actions and passions that belong to him" (ibid.).

Further on, however, Husserl qualifies these considerations so as to mark more precisely the particularities of human development. He remarks: "but the subject is not a mere unity of experience" (Hua IV, p. 274). Thus it is not fitting to reduce human development to a kind of thing-like development—that is, to refer the modifications of one's corporeity, inserted in causal nexuses, to rules of material interaction. What Husserl has in view is the following: the typification that confers a determinate character upon the person occurs not only at the level of corporeity and sensibility, but also at the spiritual layer, responsible for decision-takings and motivations actively set in motion (the human being "is the same not merely as a bodily type but also as a spiritual type," Hua IV, p. 273). And in order to understand the individual typical character of personhood, one must employ empathy—placing oneself in the other's position and seeking to reproduce the salient apprehensive forms of that individual character: "through empathy I apprehend what motivates him and how strongly, with what power. And inwardly I learn to understand how

[5] It is worth noting that Husserl recognizes the importance of the correlations between material causality and subjective effects for studies related to medicine: "medical knowledge can serve to draw correctly upon the psychic effects that are at issue in subjective development, and thus bring them to light for the elucidation of motivations and of development. In that case, the physical serves as an index of what is to be integrated [*das Einzulegende*]" (Hua IV, p. 276).

he comports himself and how he would comport himself once such-and-such motives determine him so strongly, what he can and cannot do" (Hua IV, p. 274). Personal typicality is not formed only in visible bodily comportment; it refers to spiritual dispositions—and to these there is no direct access, but only an analogical one.

As we know, Husserl did not develop particular clinical analyses, but his emphasis on the notion of empathy ends up suggesting a privileged methodological path for psychological clinical exercises inspired by his work.

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